

Proposed Apportionment of Reserves

Regulations implementing the FMP require 20 percent of each TAC for pollock, Pacific cod, flatfish, and the "other species" category be set aside in reserves for possible apportionment at a later date (*see* § 679.20(b)(2)). In 2003, NMFS reapportioned all of the reserves in the final harvest specifications. Between 1997 and 2000, NMFS retained the Pacific cod reserve to provide for a management buffer to account for excessive fishing effort and incomplete or late catch reporting. NMFS believes this is no longer necessary as estimates of catch and incidental catch needs in other directed fisheries have improved in recent years. For 2004, NMFS proposes apportionment of all of the reserve for pollock, Pacific cod, flatfish,

and "other species". Specifications of TAC shown in Table 1 reflect apportionment of reserve amounts for these species and species groups.

Proposed Allocations of the Sablefish TAC Amounts to Vessels Using Hook-and-Line and Trawl Gear

Under § 679.20(a)(4)(i) and (ii), sablefish TACs for each of the regulatory areas and districts are allocated to hook-and-line and trawl gear. In the Western and Central Regulatory Areas, 80 percent of each TAC is allocated to hook-and-line gear and 20 percent of each TAC is allocated to trawl gear. In the Eastern Regulatory Area, 95 percent of the TAC is allocated to hook-and-line gear and 5 percent is allocated to trawl gear. The trawl gear allocation in the Eastern Regulatory Area may only be

used to support incidental catch of sablefish in directed fisheries for other target species. In recognition of the trawl ban in the SEO District of the Eastern Regulatory Area, the Council recommended that 5 percent of the combined Eastern GOA sablefish be allocated to trawl gear in the WYK District and the remainder to vessels using hook-and-line gear. In the SEO District, 100 percent of the sablefish TAC is allocated to vessels using hook-and-line gear. This recommendation results in an allocation of 225 mt to trawl gear and 1,551 mt to hook-and-line gear in the WYK District and 2,726 mt to hook-and-line gear in the SEO District. Table 2 shows the allocations of the proposed 2004 sablefish TACs between hook-and-line gear and trawl gear.

TABLE 2.—PROPOSED 2004 SABLEFISH TAC SPECIFICATIONS IN THE GULF OF ALASKA AND ALLOCATIONS THEREOF TO HOOK-AND-LINE AND TRAWL GEAR

[Values are rounded to the nearest metric ton]

Area/District	TAC	Hook-and-line allocation	Trawl allocation
Western	1,968	1,574	394
Central	4,931	3,945	986
West Yakutat	1,776	1,551	225
Southeast Outside	2,726	2,726	0
Total	11,400	9,796	1,605

Proposed Apportionments of Pollock TAC Among Seasons and Regulatory Areas, and Allocations for Processing by Inshore and Offshore Components

In the GOA, pollock is apportioned by season and area, and is further allocated for processing by inshore and offshore components. Under regulations at § 679.20(a)(5)(iii)(B), the annual pollock TAC specified for the Western and Central Regulatory Areas of the GOA is apportioned into four equal seasonal allowances of 25 percent. As established by § 679.23(d)(2)(i) through (iv), the A, B, C, and D season allowances are available from January 20 through February 25, March 10 through May 31, August 25 through September 15, and October 1 through November 1, respectively.

Pollock TACs in the Western and Central Regulatory Areas of the GOA in the A and B seasons are apportioned among statistical areas 610, 620, and 630 in proportion to the distribution of pollock biomass as determined by a composite of NMFS winter surveys and in the C and D seasons in proportion to the distribution of pollock biomass as

determined by the four most recent NMFS summer surveys. As in 2003, the Council recommended that during the A season, the winter and summer distribution of pollock be averaged in the Central Regulatory Area to better reflect the distribution of pollock and the performance of the fishery in the area during the A season. Within any fishing year, the underage or overage of a seasonal apportionment may be added to or subtracted from subsequent seasonal apportionments in a manner to be determined by the Regional Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, provided that the sum of the revised seasonal allowances does not exceed 30 percent of the annual TAC apportionment for the Central and Western Regulatory Areas in the GOA (§ 679.20(a)(5)(iii)(B)). For 2004, 30 percent of the proposed annual TAC for the Central and Western Regulatory Areas is 14,044 mt. The WYK and SEO District pollock TACs of 1,078 mt and 6,460 mt, respectively, are not allocated seasonally.

Regulations at § 679.20(a)(6)(i) require that 100 percent of the pollock TAC in

all regulatory areas and all seasonal allowances thereof be allocated to vessels catching pollock for processing by the inshore component after subtraction of amounts that are projected by the Regional Administrator to be caught by, or delivered to, the offshore component incidental to directed fishing for other groundfish species. The amount of pollock available for harvest by vessels harvesting pollock for processing by the offshore component is that amount actually taken as incidental catch during directed fishing for groundfish species other than pollock, up to the maximum retainable amounts allowed under regulations at § 679.20(e) and (f). At this time, these incidental catch amounts are unknown and will be determined during the fishing year.

The proposed seasonal biomass distribution of pollock in the Western and Central GOA, area apportionments, and seasonal allowances for the A, B, C, and D seasons are summarized in Table 3.